

in large measure, depend on our level of preparedness and the amount of resources we are willing to immediately commit to deal with this looming crisis.

Over the last few months, we have seen alarming reports from countries all over Asia—Indonesia, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Russia, just to name a few—about deaths that have resulted from the avian flu.

The situation has turned so ominous that Dr. Julie Gerberding, the Director of the CDC, said that an avian flu outbreak is “the most important threat that we are facing [today].”

International health experts say that two of the three conditions for an avian flu pandemic in Southeast Asia already exist.

First, a new strain of the virus, called H5N1, has emerged, and humans have little or no immunity to it. Second, this strain has demonstrated the ability to jump between species.

The only thing preventing a full blown pandemic is a lack of efficient transmission of this strain from human to human. Once that happens, as a consequence of international travel and commerce, there is not going to be any way to effectively contain this pandemic.

Moreover, the news on this last point is not good. In recent months, the virus has been detected in mammals that have never previously been infected, including tigers, leopards and domestic cats. This suggests that the virus is mutating and could eventually emerge in a form that is readily transmittable among humans.

Mr. President, Senator REID and Senator DURBIN both outlined some of the measures that have to be put in place here domestically to protect our population. We have to drastically ramp up our stockpiles of Tamiflu, which, if taken properly, could act as a treatment from the avian flu once a person is infected. Right now, we only have a couple of million doses. We need 80 million to 100 million doses in order to be adequately prepared. That is going to cost us significant amounts of money, as the cost of Tamiflu is approximately \$20 per dose.

In addition, we are going to have to develop flu vaccines of a sort we have not seen in the past. In order to create sufficient quantities, we are going to have to go push the boundaries of existing technologies and science—going beyond the agricultural mechanisms of developing vaccines that we have used in the past.

Third, we are going to make sure that local and State governments understand how urgent this is. We have to ensure there are clear plans, coordination mechanisms, and lines of authority—that will stand up in a time of crisis. Right now, we do not have sufficient plans in place to make sure local and State agencies are able to generate the kinds of rapid responses that are going to be necessary in the case of a flu outbreak.

After Katrina, I hope that local and State governments understand they have to work with the Federal agencies more effectively to deal with these kinds of emergencies.

Another issue I would mention is that we are going to have to establish international protocols to ensure we can alert ourselves rapidly if we have confirmed cases of human-to-human transmission of the avian flu anywhere in the world. Why do I mention this? If we detect efficient human-to-human transmission, it is likely that we are going to have only weeks before we are going to see those first cases in the United States.

This means placing effective trigger mechanisms in all these countries to make sure everyone is cooperating and providing rapid information, which could mean the difference in terms of tens or hundreds of thousands of lives.

Now I don't want to suggest that nothing is being done. For example, months ago, Congress, on a bipartisan basis including myself, Senator LUGAR, Senator MCCONNELL, and Senator LEAHY—included \$25 million as part of the Iraq supplemental to make contribute to an urgent WHO appeal on this issue. Today, this money is making a difference in the field trying to set up some of the international measures I just described.

I, along with Senators LUGAR, DURBIN and others, introduced legislation, S. 969, to enhance our ability to deal with this potential crisis. But that was months ago, and we need to broaden the number of people involved in this effort.

Moreover, these are modest first steps. Going forward, we are going to need significantly more resources. I am eager to work with leaders on health issues, including Senator HARKIN and Senator REID, as well as others across the aisle.

I hope we can work not only to make sure we have an effective international regime to deal with this problem overseas but that we also invest the time, the energy, and the resources needed to put in place effective measures well before we have a full blown crisis on our hands.

An outbreak of the avian flu could occur in a year, 5 years, 10 years, or if we were incredibly lucky not happen at all. But the one good thing about investing in measures to deal with this looming crisis is—and I will end on this point—if we spend the money now, it will pay dividends, even if this particular strain of the avian flu outbreak does not occur.

Why is this the case? The risk of some sort of pandemic, and the mutations of flus for which we have no immunity, is almost inevitable. The H5N1 strain may not be the strain that leads to a full blown pandemic. But, another strain could easily come along a cause serious damage in the future.

Presently, we simply do not have the public health infrastructure to deal adequately with this contingency.

My point is this: undertaking these measures is going to be a wise investment that will help protect the lives of millions of people here in the United States and across the globe.

Mr. President, I appreciate your patience very much and look forward to working with you on this issue.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. I thank the Senator.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:30 A.M. TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:30 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:37 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 29, 2005, at 9:30 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate September 28, 2005:

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

JENDAYI ELIZABETH FRAZER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE (AFRICAN AFFAIRS), TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TERM EXPIRING SEPTEMBER 27, 2009, VICE CONSTANCE BERRY NEWMAN.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION

HORACE A. THOMPSON, OF MISSISSIPPI, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH REVIEW COMMISSION FOR A TERM EXPIRING APRIL 27, 2011, VICE JAMES M. STEPHENS, TERM EXPIRED.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

KENT D. TALBERT, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE GENERAL COUNSEL, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, VICE BRIAN JONES, RESIGNED.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

CAROL E. DINKINS, OF TEXAS, TO BE CHAIRMAN OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD. (NEW POSITION)

ALAN CHARLES RAUL, OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, TO BE VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES OVERSIGHT BOARD. (NEW POSITION)

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS PROVIDED BY LAW, THE FOLLOWING FOR PERMANENT APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION.

To be lieutenant junior grade

MELISSA M. FORD

To be ensign

MADELEINE M. ADLER
CAROL N. ARSENAULT
JAMES L. BRINKLEY
JOHN E. CHRISTENSEN
SEAN M. FINNEY
LAUREL K. JENNINGS
GUINEVERE R. LEWIS
ALLISON R. MARTIN
JASON R. SAXE
PAUL M. SMIDANSKY
DAVID A. STRAUSS
REBECCA J. WADDINGTON
JAMIE S. WASSER

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATE FOR PERSONNEL ACTION IN THE REGULAR COMPONENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS THEREFOR AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS:

1. FOR APPOINTMENT:

To be assistant surgeon

LEAH HILL

THE FOLLOWING CANDIDATES FOR PERSONNEL ACTION IN THE REGULAR COMPONENT OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE SUBJECT TO QUALIFICATIONS THEREFOR AS PROVIDED BY LAW AND REGULATIONS:

1. FOR APPOINTMENT:

To be medical director

GREGORY A. ABBOTT

To be senior surgeon

WANDA DENISE BARFIELD
RUTHANN M. GIUSTI
SONJA S. HUTCHINS